Learning from the Teachings and Actions of Jesus

Luke 6:1–11

The teachings and actions of Jesus are truly mysterious. He was born as the Savior in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and promises. He acknowledged the Old Testament as God's authoritative Word, teaching that every detail—even the smallest letter—must be upheld.

And yet, as in today's passage, Jesus often boldly, deliberately, and purposefully broke or disregarded the Old Testament law. He released the woman caught in adultery. He entered the homes of despised sinners and shared meals with them.

Observing His teaching, the stern image of a rigid God derived from strict interpretations of the Law fades away. Instead, we see a gracious and gentle Father who earnestly desires human happiness and freely shows mercy.

I. Jesus as the Fulfillment of the Old Testament

The Old Testament is a book of God's promise: that a Savior would be given to people doomed to death because of sin. This promise is its theme and purpose. Without it, humanity could not know the Savior. Jesus came to fulfill this promise. His life was the fulfillment of the Old Testament, as Matthew's Gospel (addressed especially to Jews) repeatedly emphasizes.

As foretold, Jesus offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for humanity's sins. The Passover lamb was only a shadow, but Christ was the reality—crucified and pouring out His precious blood. The rock struck by Moses in the wilderness was only a symbol; Christ became the true eternal Rock, struck by God to bring forth living water. Unlike lambs, goats, or bulls offered again and again yet unable to cleanse sin, Christ's one sacrifice was perfect and sufficient. He came to fulfill the Law.

II. Jesus Breaking the Law

Yet paradoxically, the same Jesus who declared He fulfilled the Law also frequently and intentionally broke it. For this very reason, His opponents plotted and ultimately

killed Him. Unlike those who clung to rigid, literal interpretations, Jesus valued the Law's true spirit.

He deliberately violated the Sabbath and defended doing so. He refused to condemn the adulterous woman (John 8:1–11). He lovingly associated with men despised for breaking the Law (Matthew 9:10–13). Quoting Hosea, He declared that God desires mercy, not sacrifice (Matthew 12:7). In His parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9–14), He portrayed the law-keeping Pharisee as rejected by God, while the broken sinner, who could barely pray, was accepted.

III. Jesus Valued the Law Written on the Heart

Jesus never dismissed the Law as useless. Rather, He grasped its essence. He elevated love for God and neighbor as its foundation. This was not about minute regulations but about the spirit of the Law—both the written Law and the Law written on the heart (Romans 2:12–15), rooted in humanity's God-given nature (Genesis 1:26–27).

The written Law prepared Israel for the coming Savior. The inner Law, however, is more fundamental—guiding all people in how to live as humans. The written Law was given to Israel; the inner Law was given to all nations. Both are from God, but for different purposes. The written Law is studied and practiced; the inner Law functions instinctively within the human heart.

Jesus came to fulfill the written Law, yet He emphasized living according to the inner Law: gently, trustfully, relying on God. He taught us to look at the birds of the air and the flowers of the field and to trust the heavenly Father revealed in them.

IV. The Old Testament Points to the Savior; the Inner Law Guides Human Life

What we need today is to understand the distinct role and purpose of the Old Testament Law. It was given to shape Israel as the nation that would receive the Savior. It was not meant to be applied unchanged to Gentiles, such as the Japanese. What we need is the Law written on the heart—the instinctive sense of how to live as human beings.

Still, the inner Law alone cannot reveal the true Creator. Sin has blurred its letters. Therefore, the Old Testament’s revelation of God’s character is crucial—His self-introduction as “I AM” and His account of creation.

As Christians living in Japan, a Gentile land, we must value both the image of God imprinted on the Japanese heart and the written revelation of God’s self-introduction. We long for Japanese people to understand the true God. Like the Apostle Paul in Athens, who began by proclaiming the Creator, we must do the same. Without knowing the Creator, one cannot truly know Christ.